

OSDBU UPDATE

Department of Veterans Affairs

August 1999

Notes from Scott

On August 26, our nation recognizes Women's Equality Day, commemorating the passage of the 19th amendment to the Constitution, which established the rights of women to vote. That amendment led to profound cultural and economic changes in our country. Only recently, have women business owners been a true force in the nation's economy. As you will see elsewhere in this issue, female entrepreneurs are acknowledged as one of the most rapidly expanding sectors in the business world. We are dedicating this month's issue of the OSDBU Update to VA personnel who open the doors of opportunity for women-owned businesses. In an attachment to this issue, you can see our record of remarkable progress in expanding prime contract awards with women. In Fiscal Year 1997, VA was number one among the large civilian agencies. In Fiscal Year 1998, we were number 2 behind the Department of State. I

am confident that, working together - contracting, technical and small business specialists - we can reclaim our leadership position in Federal contracting with women-owned businesses. To assist contracting activities in targeting opportunities for women, our office is chartering a working group to study best practices in Government and the private sector. Congratulations to everyone who helped put VA at the top in this goaling category. It's your hard work and your success that reflects so well on our Department.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 VHA Honorees
- 3 Women-Owned Small Business Summit
- 5 Women's Outreach

**SMALL BUSINESS
BUILDS AMERICA!**

Veterans Health Administration Honorees

VA's Small Business Achievement Recognition Program was established in 1987. Each year, OSDBU recognizes high achieving facilities for accomplishments with women-owned small businesses. In this special edition of the OSDBU Update, we again honor the staff of these health care activities for their support. Facilities who received multiyear honors are identified by parentheses indicating the number of times the facility was recognized.

| VISN | Facilities |
|------|---|
| 2 | Batavia |
| 3 | Montrose, New York, Providence |
| 6 | Asheville, Montgomery |
| 10 | Dayton |
| 11 | Battle Creek, Indianapolis |
| 12 | Chicago (Lakeside) |
| 13 | Hot Springs, Fort Meade (2) |
| 14 | Knoxville, IA |
| 15 | Little Rock, Poplar Bluff, Topeka (2) |
| 16 | Biloxi (2), Fayetteville, AR (3), Jackson, Muskogee (3), Shreveport |
| 17 | Bonham (2), Marlin |
| 19 | Grand Junction, Fort Harrison |
| 20 | Anchorage, White City |

If your VISN is not represented on this chart, is underrepresented on this chart, or your facility is not listed here, the challenge before you is to proactively commit to supporting Women-owned Small Businesses. As reported elsewhere in this newsletter, WOSBs are the fastest growing segment of the marketplace. Today, there are more than 9 million firms owned by women. We have a tremendous outreach opportunity before us. With the Very Small Business Pilot program offering set-asides for very small firms, with HUB Zone competitive and sole source mechanisms and with SBA's more flexible rules for entry to the 8(a) program, there are new vehicles in place to reach women entrepreneurs. The legislated minimum for Federal achievements with women-owned businesses is 5% of prime contracts and 5% of subcontracts. These outstanding facilities have significantly achieved greater percentages, up to 60% of their prime contract dollars with WOSBs. Congratulations to all the staff of the facilities on this list.

Women-Owned Firms (Registered in Pro-Net) Get a Contracting Edge

by Deborah Van Dover

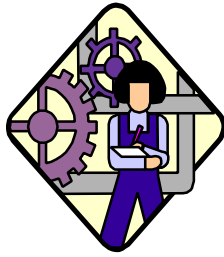
OFPP and SBA are discussing an agreement that will allow agencies to request a waiver from advertising in the CBD for procurements *under* \$100,000 if a contracting officer solicits bid information from five *small* businesses. When available, the list will include *one woman-owned, one small disadvantaged and for VA one veteran-owned business* listed in the SBA database Pro-Net. Pro-Net shall be the database used by all agencies for soliciting the five businesses. This procurement method will allow procurements to be done quickly, cutting the time it takes to solicit and award the contract to just a few days. The new process should save time and money in the contracting process.

Changing the Face of America's Economy

by Deborah Van Dover

Women are starting new firms at twice the rate of all other business and own nearly 40 percent of all firms in the United States. These 8 million firms employ 18.5 million individuals- *one in every five American workers*-and contribute \$2.3 trillion to the economy.

(Courtesy of the SBA's Office of Women's Business Ownership]



WOMEN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS SUMMIT

by Deborah A. Van Dover

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to supporting women-owned small businesses (WOSB). One initiative is VA's Women's Summit, scheduled for October 1999. In this meeting, we will seek information and advice from selected women's business advocates outside VA about excellent WOSB outreach and program practices. VA women's Summit participants will then develop a departmental plan and tool kit for WOSB program improvements.

We are limiting VA participation in the group to approximately 6-9 VA leaders in women's business programs who will present local, regional and national VA procurement organizations. The smaller size of the group is expected to foster informal exchange between the speakers and participants. Each VA participant will comprise a "fact sheet" detailing what activities have been undertaken at their facility to assist in locating women-owned small business concerns. The fact sheets will then be shared with each group member prior to our meeting in order to allow us to begin work immediately after the scheduled speakers finish.

We have some very excellent speakers lined up and are very excited about this upcoming summit. After our summit concludes, the tool kit and departmental plan will be shared with VA field activities.

Top 50 Metropolitan Areas for Women-Owned Small Businesses

by Deborah Van Dover

The employment and revenues generated by women-owned businesses have more than doubled since 1992 in the majority of the nation's top 50 metropolitan areas, according to a 1999 analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau data released on June 29, 1999 by the National Foundation for Women Business Owners (NFWBO) and Wells Fargo. The report documents that women-owned businesses are continuing to grow faster than the economy in these leading areas.

Titled "1999 Facts on Women-Owned Businesses: Trends in the Top 50 Metropolitan Areas", the report shows that during just the past 7 years, the number of women-owned businesses in each of the 50 top metropolitan areas has grown significantly from a 33% to a 59% increase. NFWBO's research shows that nationally, there are 9.1 million women-owned businesses in the U.S. as of 1999. The top 50 metro areas are home to half of these firms—nearly 4.6 million businesses. Furthermore, these firms are increasingly substantial, making important contributions to the economic health and vitality of their local communities by employing a total of 15.5 million people and generating \$2.1 trillion in sales.

The top metropolitan areas for women-owned businesses-ranked on an averaging of number of firms, employment, and sales-are: 1) New York, NY; 2) Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA, 3) Chicago, IL, 4) Philadelphia, PA-NJ, 5) Houston, TX, 6) Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV, 7) Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA, 8) Dallas, TX, 9) Orange County, CA, and 10) Nassau-Suffolk, NY.

The cities with the fastest growth in women-owned businesses ranked on an averaging of the percent growth in number, employment and sales between 1992 and 1999-are: 1)Portland, OR-Vancouver, WA, 2) Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA, 3) Phoenix-Mesa, AZ, 4) Houston, TX, 5) Nashville, TN, 6) Miami, FL, 7) Sacramento, CA, 8) Dallas, TX, 9) Orlando, FL, and 9) San Diego, CA (tied).

(Courtesy of the National Foundation for Women Business Owners)

Contracting Opportunities for Women-Owned Businesses

by Deborah Van Dover

Women business owners control only about 2 percent of all governmental contracts, even though they own nearly 40 percent of all small businesses. As a result, SBA's Administrator, Aida Alvarez, has called for a "focused and sustained effort to increase the participation of women-owned businesses in the federal contracting marketplace." To begin that effort, SBA recently announced partnership programs with nine other federal agencies aimed at reaching the 5 percent contracting goal for women set by Congress several years ago.

These agreements mean that each department will look for innovative ways to increase the number of

women-owned businesses bidding on and winning federal contracts. As a first step, each of the agencies plan to appoint a Women's Business Advocate to serve as a direct liaison to the women-owned business community. The advocates' jobs will be to aggressively encourage the procurement offices within each department to consider using women-owned firms whenever possible. The departments also plan to use the SBA's procurement database, Pro-Net, to help match their contracting opportunities with women-owned small business concerns.

Department of Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater was the first agency head to agree to work with SBA. Other federal departments working on partnership agreements with SBA are the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, State, Energy, Labor, Veterans Affairs, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the General Services Administration. Together these agencies represent more than 90 percent of the overall \$200 billion federal contracting market.

(Courtesy of the March 1999 Issue of Contract Management, National Contract Management Association)

Online Women's Business Center

by Jim Dunning

Small business specialists often interview companies that are on a less than sound footing but want to do business with the government. Where do you direct those people to receive the help they need before contracting with the government? For women-owned businesses the answer is the Online Women's Business Center at the Small Business Administration (SBA). Accessible via the Internet (www.onlinewbc.org/docs/about/index.html), it is "dedicated to helping entrepreneurial women to realize their goals and aspirations for their personal and professional development".

The site includes information about learning to start, grow, and expand a business. There is additional information on managing, financing, marketing, technology, and procurement. In addition there are information exchanges, resources (including links to the SBA Women's Business Centers and other Internet sites), frequently asked questions, and a "what's new" section. For instance, there are forty references alone on developing an employee handbook.

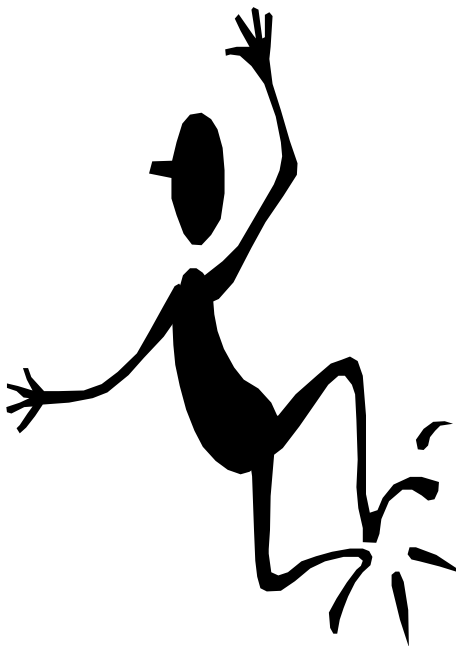
One section covers articles submitted by successful businesswomen on lessons learned such as "Jumping In to Help a Client", "Supervising Workers", "Looks Too Good to be True", and "Be Thorough on New, Unfamiliar Proposals". PowerPoint presentations are downloadable in such subjects as time management, conflict management, stress management, and new ventures.

By visiting this site, working with the SBA Women's Business Centers, and following some of the links to other WOB sites, a woman-owned business can gather the benefits of a vast number of women entrepreneurs that have traveled the path before her.

Golf Trivia

by Sherra Berutto

Lisa Russell, your very own FPDS Agency Coordinator, had her first hole-in-one on the golf course on July 31, 1999. On a 110 yard Par 3, Lisa used a 7 iron to hit a nice high shot that bounced once and rolled straight in the cup. It was witnessed by three of her golfing buddies, who were quite excited (Lisa was too astonished to be excited). Lisa has been playing golf for 6 years. CONGRATULATIONS LISA!



Support for Women-owned Businesses

FY 1992-1998

Benchmark Data In Descending Rank Order

| Dept/Agency | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Agriculture | 9 (2.5%) | 11 (2.9%) | 10 (3.2%) | 12.5 (2.8%) | 10 (2.8%) | 7 (3.1%) | 10 (3.01%) |
| Commerce | 8 (2.8%) | 5 (4.5%) | 9 (3.6%) | 3.5 (6.6%) | 2 (7.6%) | 2 (5.6%) | 3 (5.03%) |
| Education | 7 (3.6%) | 8 (3.6%) | 11 (2.7%) | 10 (3.4%) | 16 (1.8%) | 15 (1.4%) | 13 (1.55%) |
| Energy | 13 (1.8%) | 13.5 (2.3%) | 7 (4.4%) | 11 (3.1%) | 11 (2.7%) | 17 (0.2%) | 17 (0.23%) |
| HHS | 4* (4.1%) | 7 (3.9%) | 5 (4.8%) | 5 (5.9%) | 5 (5.6%) | 3 (4.6%) | 7 (3.42%) |
| HUD | 1 (8.4%) | 1 (6.9%) | 1 (8.1%) | 1 (7.5%) | 1 (10.3%) | 13 (1.6%) | 12 (2.43%) |
| Interior | 4* (4.1%) | 4 (4.7%) | 6 (4.7%) | 7.5 (4.9%) | 7 (5.1%) | 4 (4.2%) | 4 (4.06%) |
| Justice | 2 (6.0%) | 12 (2.8%) | 12 (2.4%) | 14 (2.5%) | 12 (2.6%) | 11 (2.4%) | 9 (3.04%) |
| Labor | 11 (2.1%) | 9 (3.2%) | 14.5 (2.0%) | 12.5 (2.8%) | 15 (2.0%) | 16 (1.3%) | 15 (1.37%) |
| State | 6 (3.7%) | 6 (4.2%) | 3 (6.3%) | 3.5 (6.6%) | 8 (5.0%) | 8 (3.0%) | 1 (5.96%) |
| Transportation | 12 (1.9%) | 10 (3.0%) | 12 (2.2%) | 9 (3.9%) | 13 (2.4%) | 6 (3.9%) | 6 (3.61%) |
| Treasury | 4* (4.1%) | 3 (5.4%) | 4 (4.9%) | 6 (5.2%) | 6 (5.2%) | 5 (4.1%) | 5 (3.72%) |
| EPA | 17 (1.2%) | 16 (1.5%) | 16 (1.4%) | 15 (2.3%) | 14 (2.1%) | 12 (2.0%) | 11 (2.68%) |
| GSA (FSS) | 16 (1.4%) | 2 (6.3%) | 2 (6.3%) | 2 (7.2%) | 3 (7.0%) | N/A** | N/A** |
| GSA (nonFSS) | 14.5 (1.7%) | 15 (1.8%) | 14.5 (2.0%) | 16 (2.1%) | 9 (3.3%) | 10 (2.5%) | 8 (3.30%) |
| NASA | 18 (0.8%) | 17 (1.0%) | 17 (1.7%) | 17 (1.6%) | 17.5 (1.6%) | 14 (1.5%) | 14 (1.38%) |
| TN Valley Auth | 14.5 (1.7%) | 18 (0.3%) | 18 (0.7%) | 18 (1.5%) | 17.5 (1.6%) | 9 (2.6%) | 16 (0.89%) |
| | | | | | | | |
| VA | 10/18 (2.2%) | 13.5/18 (2.3%) | 8/18 (3.8%) | 7.5/18 (4.9%) | 4/18 (5.8%) | 1/17 (5.9%) | 2/17 (5.46%) |

Source: The State of Small Business, A Report of the President, years 1995-1996. Federal Procurement Data System Reports FYs 1997, 1998.

Note: Department of Defense is excluded from these figures.

- FY 92 ranking 3/4/5 is tied, rank #4 assigned to all. FY 92 rank 13 & 14 tied, 14.5 assigned to both. Same ranking used for ties in FYs 93-96.

**GSA is reported as a combined entity by FPDS

Women's Outreach

by Deborah Van Dover

VA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization has a very proactive outreach program for women small business owners wishing to "do business" with VA. The Outreach Coordinator is Deborah Van Dover, email: Deborah.VanDover@mail.va.gov. Outreach consists of panel discussions, one-on-one counseling sessions at a variety of trade and governmental small business shows, presentations at small business conferences, and information provided in response to inquiries made of our office. The monthly vendor counseling session conducted by OSDBU can also be a great resource for female small business owners.